

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00282 250716Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----250718 039154 /11

R 241431Z FEB 77
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8740
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NY
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0282

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS
SUBJ: SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

1. UN SOURCE FEBRUARY 24 PROVIDED FOLLOWING SUMMARY
OF RECENT REPORTS TO UNHQ OF SITUATION IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON AS REPORTED BY UNTSO DURING WEEK FEB. 14-20.
OP'S MAR, RAS AND KHIAM REPORTED FIGHTING, AT TIMES
INTENSE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM FORCES IN
THEIR AREAS OF OBSERVATION. BOTH SIDES USED ARTILLERY,
MORTARS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. IN ADDITION, CHRISTIAN
FORCES USED SHERMAN TANKS.

2. IN LATE AFTERNOON FEB. 17, UNDER FOGGY CONDITIONS,
CHRISTIAN FORCES FROM MAJAYOUN AND EL QLAIA CARRIED
OUT A SUCCESSFUL COORDINATED ATTACK (ARTILLERY, TANKS
AND TROOPS) AGAINST MOSLEM FORCES IN EL KHIAM.
(FIGHTING WAS INTENSE ENOUGH SO THAT UNTSO OBSERVERS
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WENT TO THE SHELTER FOR TWO HOURS.) ONE OF THE TARGETS
ATTACKED WAS THE FORMER ARAB LIBERATION ARMY BARRACKS
LOCATED 100 METRES FROM OP KHIAM. ON FEB. 18, MOSLEM
FORCES CONDUCTED A LIMITED UNSUCCESSFUL COUNTERATTACK
FROM THE NORTH AND EAST COMING FROM THE AKOUB VALLEY
AREA. CHRISTIAN FORCES, SUPPORTED BY ARTILLERY AND
TANKS, HAD NO TROUBLE REPULSING THIS ATTACK. AS OF

FEB. 21, CHRISTIAN FORCES WERE FIRING INTO AND AROUND VILLAGES OF KFAR CHOUBA, KFAR HAMAM AND RACHAIYA EL FOUKHAR, ALL LOCATED EAST OF THE HASBANI RIVER IN THE AKOUB VALLEY. UNTIL ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO, THESE VILLAGES HAD BEEN DESERTED AND UN ASSUMES THEY NOW OCCUPIED BY FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS.

3. THE CHRISTIAN FORCES IN AIN EBEL/RMAICH CONTINUE TO FIGHT WITH MOSLEMS IN BEN TJBAIL. MOST OF THE FIRING IS FROM RMAICH WHERE THREE 105MM HOWITZERS ARE LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE NEW ROAD FROM BORDER POST 16 TO RMAICH. THE LOCAL PEOPLE APPEAR TO FEEL THERE IS NO DANGER FROM MOSLEMS RETURNING FIRE SINCE THEY SIT AS SPECTATORS IN VICINITY OF HOWITZERS WHILE THEY ARE FIRED. ROUTE OF UNTSO VEHICLES TAKES THEM IN FRONT OF THE 105'S. AS UN VEHICLES APPROACH FIRING IS STOPPED, VEHICLES PASS AND THEN FIRING RESUMES.

4. UN STATES DURING PERIOD JANUARY 15-FEBRUARY 15 OVER 1,000 ARTILLERY ROUNDS HAVE BEEN FIRED BY CHRISTIAN GUNS LOCATED IN THE RMAICH AND MARJAYOUN AREAS. THIS FIGURE DOES NOT RPT NOT INCLUDE TANKS, MORTAR AND AUTOMATIC-WEAPONS FIRE. UN DRAWS CONCLUSION CONSIDERABLE LOGISTIC SUPPORT ENTAILED.

5. UN HAS ALSO OBSERVED CHRISTIAN TANKS AND APC'S CROSSING INTO ISRAEL FOR MAINTENANCE AT GOOD FENCE OPENING AT HANITA (NEAR BORDER POST 6) AND DOVEV (NEAR BORDER POST 16).

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6. UN SOURCE REASONABLY CERTAIN FEDAYEEN UNITS HAVE RETURNED TO AKOUB AREA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISSIDENT FACTIONS, CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977JERUSA00282
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770214/aaaaamft.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e46dc1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3243564
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS, SY, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e46dc1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009